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MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH'S

REPORT

for

1947.

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BOROUGH OF RYE.

To the Mayor, Alderman and Councillors  
of the Borough of Rye.

Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present you with my annual report for the year 1947. Of that year I had only the honour to be your Medical Officer of Health for the last nine months, but the report and statistics are, of course, for the calendar year.

This report is, as during the war years, abbreviated and abridged in order to save paper. Next year, when I have completed a full year as your Medical Officer, I hope to submit a more comprehensive report.

I would like to thank you, Mr. Mayor, and your colleagues on the Council for your warm and kindly welcome when I took office, and I would like to pay tribute to the co-operation so readily afforded me by your Accountant Officer, your Surveyor, your Sanitary Inspector and your Housing Officer, and the clerical staff, in addition to the constant help and kindness of your Town Clerk. It is not easy to master in a short time the details and needs of an ancient town so full of tradition as Rye, but this cordial co-operation has done much to render my path easy.

I am particularly glad to be an officer of this ancient town at one of the critical times in its history when its future status in local government and the area of jurisdiction of its Council remain to be finally decided. But it is my belief that its long story of local government is about to be continued with what I hope will be enhanced authority and effectiveness.

I have the honour to be,  
Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

ERIC C. DOWNER.

Medical Officer of Health.

Public Health Department,  
The Watch Oak,  
Battle,  
Sussex.

STAFF.

Medical Officer of Health	From 1st January to 31st March, 1947: Sir Alan Moore, Bt., M.B., D.P.H. From 1st April, 1947: Eric C. Downer, M.A., D.P.H.
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The Medical Officer is also Medical Officer of Health of the Battle Rural District and Assistant School Medical Officer under the County Medical Officer of Health for East Sussex.

Sanitary Inspector and Meat Inspector.	H. C. Gower, A.R.San.I.
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Surveyor, Town Planning Officer and Water Officer.	A. G. J. Cornner, O.B.E., M.Inst.M. & C.E., M.R.San.I.
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Area .. .. .	1,021 acres
Population by census, 1931.. .. .	3,947
Estimated population in 1947, Registrar General's figure .. .. .	4,300
Number of inhabited houses.. .. .	1,333
Number of Rateable premises, March 31st, 1947.. .. .	1,639
Rateable value .. .. .	£40,032
Sum represented by a penny rate for the Financial year ending March 31st, 1947. (Estimated).	£146

CHIEF OCCUPATIONS AND INDUSTRIES.

Shopkeeping. Catering. Building.

General and structural engineering. Agriculture.

Fisheries. 196 vessels are registered at the Port of Rye of which some 35 berth at Rye or Rye Harbour.

Fishing in Rye Bay, which increased considerably during the war years, has now dropped almost to its pre-war level. This is accounted for by the fact that deep sea fishing, which ceased during the war, has now been resumed and much of the fish is caught before it reaches the bay. Every effort is being made to keep the industry going.

Shipping. 9 cargo boats delivered timber to Rye during the year, principally from the Netherlands.

Wooden Ship Building. At the shipyard one cabin cruiser was completed during 1947, the conversion of a large ex-naval vessel was commenced, while repair works were carried out.



BIRTHS.

Registrar General's  
figures.

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female.</u>	<u>Total</u>
Legitimate .. .. .	51	44	95
Illegitimate.. .. .	2	3	5
Total .. .. .	53	47	100
Live-Birth rate per 1,000 of Resident population			23.25
Live-Birth rate per 1,000 Civilian population for England and Wales			20.5

DEATHS.

Male ... .. 26      Female ... .. 22

Death-rate per 1,000 of population	11.16
Death-rate for England and Wales per 1,000 Civilian population	12.00
Deaths from puerperal causes	Nil
Stillbirths      Male 1      Female 0	

Deaths of infants under 1 year.

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Legitimate	2	1	3
Illegitimate	0	0	0
	2	1	3
Infant death-rate per 1,000 live births			30.00
Infant death-rate per 1,000 live births (England & Wales)			41.00
Death-rate of legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births			31.57
Death-rate of illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births			0.00
Deaths under two years from diarrhoea			Nil
Death-rate under two years from diarrhoea			0.00
Deaths from diarrhoea per 1,000 live births, England and Wales      Death-rate			5.80
Maternal deaths ... .. Nil.      Maternal mortality rate			0.00

Deaths from certain specific causes.

	<u>England &amp; Wales.</u>	<u>Rye Borough.</u>
Typhoid and paratyphoid	0.00	0.00
Scarlet fever	0.00	0.00
Whooping cough	0.02	0.00
Diphtheria	0.01	0.00
Influenza	0.09	0.00
Smallpox	0.00	0.00
Measles	0.01	0.00

Detailed Causes of Deaths.

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Tuberculosis of respiratory system	1	1	2
Other forms of tuberculosis	0	0	0
Syphilitic diseases	0	0	0
Influenza	0	0	0
Cancer (all sites)	1	2	3
Diabetes	0	0	0
Intercranial vascular lesions	2	1	3
Heart disease	12	13	25
Other circulatory diseases	2	1	3
Bronchitis	0	1	1
Pneumonia	2	0	2
Other respiratory diseases	0	0	0
Ulcer of stomach or duodenum	1	0	1
Appendicitis	0	0	0
Other digestive diseases	1	0	1
Nephritis	0	1	1
Premature birth	0	0	0
Birth injury and weakness	2	1	3
Suicide	0	0	0
Road traffic accidents	0	0	0
Other violence	2	0	2
All other causes	0	1	1
	<u>26</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>48</u>

## HEALTH SERVICES.

### Hospitals.

The Rye, Winchelsea and District Memorial Hospital in the Parish of Rye Foreign.

The nearest large general hospital is the Royal East Sussex Hospital at Hastings.

For maternity, the Hastings Municipal Hospital and Farbank Maternity Home, Old London Road, Hastings.

Patients suffering from notifiable infectious diseases are sent to the Hastings Borough Sanatorium.

### Insulin.

In July, 1943, the Borough Council, on the advice of the Finance and Executive Committee resolved that Insulin should be supplied at the recommendation of the Medical Officer of Health to diabetics who are unable to afford it or who are unable to get it through the Insurance Scheme, the Poor Law or the Education Act. No insulin was supplied during 1947.

### Laboratories.

Pathological specimens and samples for bacteriological investigation are sent to the Laboratory at the Royal East Sussex Hospital, Hastings; water samples etc., to the County Analyst, Lewes.

### Ambulance Service.

This service is staffed by voluntary members of the St. John's Ambulance, who have two motor ambulances at Rye. A rota of nurses and drivers is kept and an ambulance is always available for accident and removal cases. A scheme for the free use of the ambulance is operated and is available to anyone paying an annual subscription of 2/6.

The St. John's Ambulance also run a Medical Comforts Depot, from which articles required in times of sickness can be hired for a small charge.

### Water Supply.

Samples are taken for bacteriological examination once a month and for chemical examination once a quarter.

Other samples are taken when advisable.

In 1947, thirty-six bacteriological samples (23 pre-chlorinated and 13 post-chlorinated) and eight chemical samples (4 pre-chlorinated and 4 post-chlorinated) were taken.

All water supplied to consumers was satisfactory. The water is chlorinated.

60,760,000 gallons were supplied from the Cadborough Pumping Station and 13,165,000 from the Military Road Pumping Station, making a total of 73,925,000 gallons. This is approximately  $7\frac{1}{2}$  million gallons more than was pumped in the previous year. Of this amount 5,229,300 gallons were supplied in bulk to the Battle Rural District Council. This is just over half a million gallons more than was supplied in the previous year.



## Water Supply. (Contd.)

The Borough Surveyor prepared a Scheme for additional supplies for the Borough of Rye. This Scheme is also designed to supply the eastern portion of the Battle Rural District. The proposed supply is an intake from the River Rother approximately a mile above Newenden Bridge.

## Drainage and Sewerage.

The automatic ejector stations in 1947 lifted the following amount of sewage.

Station A	917,500	gallons
Station B	5,052,000	gallons
Station C	1,486,300	gallons
Station D	3,615,360	gallons
Station E	240,000	gallons
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	11,311,160	gallons
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The above figures show an increase over the previous year by approximately 1,083,853. gallons or 10.6%.

## Scavenging.

1,402 tons of refuse were dealt with at the fully controlled Refuse Tip in Cadborough Road.

The collection and disposal of house refuse is carried out by the Council. Refuse is removed in a motor-vehicle with a covered metal body to the fully controlled refuse tip in Cadborough Road.

The work is carried out according to the latest instructions of the Ministry of Health, and is entirely satisfactory and free from annoyance.

Salvage.

					<u>Sums received.</u>		
	T.	c.	q.	lbs.	£.	s.	d.
Paper	4	13	1	26	19.	16.	7
Ferrous Metals	1	9	2	0	3.	13.	9
Non-ferrous Metals		2	1	0	6.	4.	10
Textiles (Rags etc.)		1	3	24	1.	7.	11
Bottles and Jars	4	16	2	0	45.	11.	10
	11.	3.	2.	22.	£76.	14.	11.



Control of Civil Building.

During the year 336 Licences were issued for a total amount of £22,553. This figure does not include Licences issued direct by the Ministry of Works.

The Sanitary Inspector reports:-

Thirty-one complaints of nuisances were investigated and were remedied by informal notices.

Cowsheds, dairies, bake houses etc., were periodically inspected.

No slaughter houses were in general use during the year. Ten pigs were slaughtered under the Ministry of Food regulations.

All home killed rationed meat is delivered to Rye from a Government Slaughter House outside the Borough.

Disinfestation of Vermin.

Some complaints of vermin infestations were received, mainly of fleas and cockroaches. These were successfully treated with D.D.T. spray and powder.

Factories.

There are forty-four factories on the register, 29 of which use mechanical power. These are periodically inspected and no action against offences was found necessary.

Milk Licences.

Supplementary Dealer's Licence for "Tuberculin Tested" milk.	1
Supplementary Dealer's Licence for "Accredited" milk.	1

Food Inspection.

Following is a list of food condemned as unfit for human consumption, amounting to approximately 1,464 lbs:-

Meat	37 tins
Soup	28 tins
Fish	49 tins
Milk	99 tins
Fruit	10 tins
Vegetables	62 tins
Bacon	14½ lbs.
Wet fish	54 Stones
Dried fish	18 Stones
Shell fish	20 lbs.
Preserves	93 lbs.
Fish cakes	50 lbs.
Sweets	14 lbs.
Prunes	25 lbs.
Sundries	20 lbs.

The above includes 700 lbs. of wet fish brought into Rye from Rye bay, mainly dabs and small plaice for which there is little sale.

### Disinfection.

Six houses were disinfected on notification of or after death from infectious disease.

### Rodent Control.

One part-time operative was employed during nine months of the year. The following infestations were treated:-

Rats - 12 major and 59 minor  
estimated kill 897.

Mice - 3 major and 19 minor  
estimated kill 19.

The Council adopted the Private Dwellings Special Scheme made available by the Ministry of Food, whereby all infestations of dwelling houses are treated free of charge to the occupant. The sewers were treated twice during the year.

### Housing.

New Houses - 6 Council Houses were completed during the year.

The Cudborough Road Housing Scheme was commenced and work on roads and services for Part I was completed.

Requisitioned Houses - One house was requisitioned and one requisitioned house was converted into three flats. There is little hope of further properties becoming available for requisitioning.

Hutments - Work was completed on the conversion into temporary houses of Naval and N.F.S. hutments, housing 25 families.

Maintenance Work - The repair and painting of State aided and other Council houses was cut to a minimum with the result that a large amount of work is accumulating.

Housing shortage - At the end of the year the Council had on its books 270 applicants for houses. The figure is increasing and can only be relieved by the completion of Council houses.

The development of the Council's new Tilling Green Estate is proceeding satisfactorily but it will, of course, be some time before the housing needs of the Borough are met. Until that time, a certain number of our population are living in houses which are obviously unfit. It is not possible yet, while the housing scarcity lasts, to proceed by way of Clearance Areas or by representations of individual unfit houses. But when the Town's housing needs have been provided for, the resumption of this work will have to be contemplated, and it need not be emphasised that in an ancient town like this where some old and insanitary houses have an historic or aesthetic value, this work will have to proceed with discretion. It is not proposed in the near future to attempt anything more ambitious than the representation of a few more glaring individual unfit houses.



Schools.

Rye is in process of development by the East Sussex County Council as an educational centre. Up to the present the three main schools, Rye Grammar School, Rye County Secondary Modern School and Rye County Primary School, the latter two modern in construction, are serving not only the Borough of Rye but also provide accommodation for children from many surrounding parishes.

Your Medical Officer of Health, who is also on the County School Medical Staff, acts as School Medical Officer to the three Rye Schools. In view of his other office as Medical Officer of Health to the Battle Rural District, this produces the desirable situation that the officer who inspects the children at school has also a considerable knowledge of the homes from which they come.

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

Children who received the two inoculations in 1947.

Under 5 years old... .. 50

Between 5 and 15 years.. ... 11

Re-inforcing dose:-

15 children received the third dose.

Estimated total numbers of Rye children under 15 years immunised at December 31st, 1947:-

Under 5 years old... .. 183

Between 5 and 15 years.. ... 370

Percentage of child population immunised, based on the Registrar General's figures at mid-year, 1947:-

Under 5 years... .. 49.45%

5 - 14 years ... .. 64.91%

POLIOMYELITIS.

An epidemic of acute anterior poliomyelitis, commonly but wrongly known as infantile paralysis, assailed this country in 1947.

One case occurred in Rye, a boy, who without any history of an attack of illness or fever, was suddenly found to have developed a paralysis of his wrist. Treatment was afforded to this case at the Orthopaedic Department of the Royal East Sussex Hospital and it has progressed very well. One young man was at first suspected of having poliomyelitis but it turned out to be a severe case of cerebro-spinal meningitis.

Like the Battle Rural District, our neighbours, we had a lucky escape.

### THE PREPARATION, HANDLING AND SERVICE OF FOOD.

Considerable interest and some anxiety was occasioned throughout the country in 1947 by a number of small outbreaks of food poisoning, and a great deal of attention has been concentrated on the circumstances in which food, especially uncooked food, is prepared, handled and served to the public. New regulations regarding the manufacture and storage of ice cream came into force during the year but ice cream is only one of many foods liable to contamination.

It is proposed during the coming year to concentrate some energy and thought on the preparation and handling of food in this town. When one recalls that in this town there are fourteen residential catering establishments and eighteen non-residential, eight places where snacks only are served, two industrial canteens, two hostels and four school canteens, one realises what a large part catering plays in the town's life. I feel sure that the Council will have the co-operation of all the catering establishments in any measures which we can concert together to improve the standards of cleanliness and purity of the food provided for our visitors, our work people and our children.

### BOUNDARY COMMISSION.

In October, 1947, the Borough of Rye was honoured by a visit from an Assistant Commissioner of the Local Government Boundary Commission who was investigating the claims of the Hastings County Borough to include, amongst other areas, the Borough of Rye within its boundaries.

The views of the Corporation and of its officers were placed before the Boundary Commission, and the effectiveness of Rye as the centre of a convenient Sanitary Area was stressed. Up to the end of the year no hint had been vouchsafed as to the probable outcome of the Commission's investigations.

It must be realised that not only has the position of Rye as regards Hastings to be settled, but that further consideration will have to be given to the appropriate size of the Sanitary Area based on Rye, when considering the boundaries of the East Sussex County Districts and even the boundary between the counties of Sussex and Kent. In our view, Rye could be made the centre of a highly convenient Sanitary Area, well balanced between urban and rural population and sufficiently large and productive of a sufficient rate to maintain an effective organisation and good services for the public.

### RYE AS THE CENTRE OF A HEALTH AND SANITARY DISTRICT.

There is a clearly defined area of country surrounding the Borough of Rye which forms a social unit dependent on Rye for its marketing, its shopping, educational services, for medical practitioner services and local Hospital services. This area corresponds to no present local government boundary.

The boundary between Sussex and Kent comes to within  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles of the Rye Town Hall, but many people on the other side of it look to Rye as their shopping town and social centre. Within little over a mile from the Rye Town Hall, in each direction, one finds oneself in the Battle Rural District, where within sight of the hill on which Rye sits, one has to rely on services provided from



a local government centre fourteen miles away and attainable only by a double, or in some cases a triple, 'bus journey. The same is true for Food Office and other services.

During the last few years this anomaly has been further emphasised by the development of Rye as an education centre. Children from at least ten parishes in the surrounding district attend at the Rye Grammar and County Secondary Schools. Moreover in the most recent organisation of Fire Services under the County Council, most of this area will depend on Rye for succour in case of fire.

The same is true when one turns to the services under the National Health Service Act, 1947. Ambulance services directed from Rye will satisfy the needs of at least ten parishes. A Health Centre built at Rye will provide practitioner consultation and clinic facilities for this area.

It seems anomalous that this clearly defined area should not also be a Sanitary and Local Government Area. People requiring to deal with Town Planning matters, licences to build and all kinds of sanitary matters, naturally expect facilities in the town in which they do their shopping or come for recreation or social intercourse. From the point of view of sanitary supervision and inspection, a very great saving in expense in travelling and transport would result if administration was carried out from Rye. If one postulated that this area extended roughly six miles in every direction from Rye Town Hall, one could have access to any part of it by car in about twenty minutes, and the fact that most residents in that area are frequently in Rye on their own affairs would reduce inspectorial travel by enabling most of the necessary interviewing to take place in Rye. A glance at the time-table of the local 'bus service shows that this area has amazingly good transport services from Rye to its periphery.

Two new communities may easily come to being and expand in the course of the next few years.

The first is Camber. Only the <sup>delayed</sup> provision of a water supply and the consequent sewage disposal scheme prevent that popular resort from increasing to a permanent population of not far short of 5,000 with a summer population of probably double that. Apart from a few local shops, this area is entirely dependent on Rye.

A new agricultural community may possibly come to being to the east of Rye at a point at present just within the County of Kent. This community may contain two or three thousand people. It will be 4½ miles from Rye and a great many miles from any other centre. It will have to depend on Rye for all shopping, social and health services. It seems obvious that both it and Camber can best be given sanitary and local government services from the same source.

This area ought to be of such size and sufficiently productive of rate to enable an adequate health and sanitary staff to be maintained, and it seems that the time has come when ancient boundaries, which varied in the past for many reasons, should vary again in the interests of convenient and effective services for the public.

